CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER PC 7 C01B31/00 C01B31/12 A. CLASS C01B31/02 C01B31/08 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC 7 C01B Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the International search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used) EPO-Internal C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages Category • Relevant to claim No. X DE 100 24 312 A (FRAUNHOFER GES FORSCHUNG) 26 July 2001 (2001-07-26) 1 - 4the whole document in particular: coll lines 35-68 (especially lines 40-41 and 58-61); col3 lines 3-14 and 62-68; col4 lines 59-64; col 5 lines 58- 61; example 2; claims X US 5 614 459 A (MONDRAGON FANOR ET AL) 25 March 1997 (1997-03-25) 1,4 in particular col 2 lines 21-22 and lines 44,49 column 2, line 18-30,40-55 column 3-4 claims 1.6 -/--Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. Patent family members are listed in annex. Special categories of cited documents: T later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the \*A\* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance E earlier document but published on or after the international filing date 'X' document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) 'Y' document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art. \*O\* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "&" document member of the same patent family Date of the actual completion of the International search Date of mailing of the international search report 17 March 2004 23/03/2004 Name and mailing address of the ISA Authorized officer European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo ni, Fax (+31-70) 340-3016 Arnotte, E

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